The details of the proposal will be made public when the revised draft legislation is tabled in the Houses of Parliament.

Purchase of overseas oil reserves

†529. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government contemplate to purchase oil reserves in various countries and to cooperate with Indian companies in this regard;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made for exploration of oil reserves in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AiYAR): (a) and (b) To enhance the country's energy security, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), as well as other national oil companies in association with OVL, have been pursuing acquisition of equity oil abroad, as well as acquisition abroad of oil and gas exploration acreages and producing properties.

Currently national oil companies such as OVL, IOC, OIL and GAIL have Participating Interests in oil and gas projects located in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia and the Ivory Coast.

(c) The exploratory efforts of the national and private/joint venture oil companies have established a balance recoverable oil plus oil equivalent of gas (O+OEG) of the order of 1658 million metric tonnes, as on 1.4.2004.

Artificial scarcity of gas in Delhi

530. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that LPG agencies in Delhi, in connivance with the gas companies, created artificial scarcity of gas refills before and after 31st October, 2004 when price hike was expected and Indian Customers Service helplines could not be reached;

(b) whether Government propose to investigate the matter to take penal action against those responsible therefor; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have met the LPG demand of their registered customers in full before and after 31st October, 2004 and have not come across instances of hoarding by their distributors in Dehli. The customer service cell of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) was not functioning on 30th and 31st October, 2004 owing to non-working days. IOCL has been advised to make arrangements for functioning of their Customers Service Cell on non-working days also.

(b) and (c) Any specific matters brought to the attention of Government or the Oil Marketing Companies of any deliberate creation of artificial scarcity will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with extant Marketing Discipline Guidelines.

Petro-chemical complex and SEZ at Mangalore

531. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mangalore in Karnataka has been identified for locating the Petro-chemical complex and Special Economic Zone after detailed techno-economic feasibility study and is in the process of being implemented;

(b) if so, the details in this regard with particulars of the organizations, associated with the project with their respective stake therein;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is a talk of shifting the above project to some other State; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), on behalf of the public sector oil companies, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Government of Karnataka that, *inter-alia,* envisages setting up a Petrochemical complex. The project proposal is at a conceptual stage, and pending completion of the detailed feasibility study, the structure and respective stakes of the participating companies is yet to be firmed up.

(c) There is no proposal to shift the Petrochemical project envisaged in the MoU to any Sther State.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.